

Troopers Warn Public About Leaving Cars Unattended While Idling

Delaware- With the cold weather approaching, there is an increase in the number of people who leave their cars running unattended in an effort to warm them up before driving anywhere. While this might be good for the engine and make for a toasty commute, this may be costly and is against the law in Delaware.

The most common practice is a victim leaving their car running in a parking lot while they go into a store for a quick purchase. Some car thieves look for cars idling in parking lots and in residential areas by watching the steam that emanates from a car's exhaust on a cold morning as it warms up or as they leave the car unattended. Once they see a car is left alone, all they literally have to do is walk up and drive away.

Delaware law states; **(Title 21, § 4182) Unattended motor vehicle.** No person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle shall permit it to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key and effectively setting the brake thereon and, when standing upon any grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway. For a first offense, a fine of \$25.00 – \$75.00 can be imposed.

Nowadays, vehicles generally need only 30 seconds of warming up before they are ready to go, even in cold weather. After that, the best way to increase your engine's temperature is by driving the car. Not only will this get hot air into your cabin faster, it saves gas and cuts emissions. If temperatures dip to 10-20 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, warm the car for a minute or two to ensure the oil thins and

circulates fully, but stay with the vehicle.

Even though your engine only requires a minute, you may want extra warm-up time to thaw the rest of the car. The best method for this is to start your car, turn on the defroster and let the engine warm while you scrape the windshield and clear away the frost. Try not to idle for longer than five minutes to conserve fuel and remember; always stay with the vehicle.

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